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## **Sen. Stamas welcomes Midland business owner to discuss unemployment frustrations**

**Lansing** – State Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, welcomed a local business owner to the state Capitol Wednesday to testify before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development about problems with Michigan's current unemployment system.

"After listening to the problems and concerns of constituents such as Ron Kutchey, it's easy to see that there is a problem with the unemployment system in Michigan," Stamas said.

Kutchey, of Ron Kutchey Landscaping and Irrigation in Midland, testified before the committee about difficulties with the unemployment system.

"Hopefully we can get things changed for the future and make the system quicker for both sides – the employers and the employees," Kutchey said of his opportunity to testify before the committee.

Tiffany Leiter, also of Ron Kutchey Landscaping and Irrigation, was glad for the opportunity to testify before the committee and share their experiences.

"Before we felt stuck," she said. "We appreciate the opportunity to be here in person and share our experiences."

The Department of Labor and Economic Growth promised to correct customer service problems in January 2003, although some improvements were made, serious problems have persisted with regards to the processing of unemployment claims. Currently, 70,000 complaints are being handled in the system.

"These problems need to be addressed," Stamas said. "Michigan's employees and employers deserve a more fair and efficient system."

A continuation of testimony, including a response from the department, will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

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